

Governor Steven L. Beshear  
Commonwealth of Kentucky



**Steven L. Beshear, Governor**

**Len Peters, Secretary**

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**Environmental Quality Commission Celebrates 2013 Earth Day Awards**  
*Individuals, groups recognized for environmental stewardship*

**Frankfort, Ky.** (April 12, 2013) – The Kentucky Environmental Quality Commission today recognized individuals and groups for environmental stewardship during an awards ceremony at Berry Hill Mansion in Frankfort.

Energy and Environment Cabinet Secretary Len Peters praised the recipients of the awards. "The passion that these individuals and entities have for environmental stewardship and problem solving is inspiring. Each year, I am rejuvenated by their stories, their commitment and the work that they do to improve our environment."

This year's award recipients are:

**Tony Powell, Independence**

As a former septic system inspector with the Northern Kentucky Health Department, Tony Powell became concerned about the contributions of failing septic systems to high pathogen levels in the Eagle Creek watershed. In 1997, he joined the Kentucky River Watershed Watch and began water sampling in Ten Mile and Eagle creeks in Grant County.

Since 2005, the Northern Kentucky Health Department has used grant funds obtained by Powell to operate a cost-share program that repairs or replaces specific failing septic systems. More than 57 septic systems have been repaired or replaced in the Ten Mile Creek sub watershed. This work now prevents nearly 3 million gallons of sewage from entering the waters of the Commonwealth.

Under Powell's guidance, a large mobile home community was connected to the Carrollton Sewage Treatment Plant from monies received through a Supplemental Environmental Project.

### **Watershed Watch in Kentucky**

Watershed Watch offers training to citizens interested in water quality. Volunteers are trained on how to take a qualified water sample that is analyzed by professional labs. They are also trained on how to perform basic water quality field data, consisting of dissolved oxygen, pH, temperature and conductivity. Volunteers can also be trained to perform biological and habitat assessments.

Watershed Watch groups in Kentucky include the Big Sandy, Four Rivers, Kentucky River, Licking River, Salt River, Tradewater-Lower Green, Upper Cumberland, and the Upper Green River.

### **River Fields, Louisville**

River Fields is a nonprofit organization in Louisville with over 2,100 members. Chartered more than 50 years ago, the groups' passion and mission is to protect and preserve the natural and cultural resources and landscape along the Ohio River corridor.

It is a nationally recognized land trust known for its work in education, policy advocacy and land conservation. River Fields' outreach includes wildflower walks and autumn color tours. At present, River Fields has preserved 2,200 acres of land through conservation easements.

### **Steve Coleman, Frankfort**

Frankfort's Steve Coleman is the recently retired director of the Energy and Environment Cabinet's Division of Conservation. Coleman devoted his career to conserving prime farm land and improving Kentucky's water quality. With programs such as the Kentucky Soil Erosion and Water Quality Cost Share program, landowners are made aware of how to preserve nutrients in the soil and reduce harmful runoff.

In a distinguished 37-year career with state government, he also:

- Promoted best management practices such as rotational grazing, cover crops, vegetative filter strips, stream bank stabilization and sinkhole protection;
- Helped to pursue and implement the Agriculture Water Quality Act, which requires landowners with 10 or more acres in use for agriculture or Silviculture to develop and implement a water quality plan;
- Initiated a direct aid program that has become a critical resource for local conservation districts to provide part-time or full-time technical and administrative positions;
- Directed the Green River Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program, which reduces silt, sediment, nutrients and pesticides from farms from entering the environmentally sensitive Green River and Mammoth Cave system; and,
- Implemented the Mississippi River Basin Initiative, a project designed to reduce the level of agricultural nutrients going into the Mississippi River.

Over the four-year lifespan of the project, incentive payments totaling \$25.5 million will be awarded to Kentucky landowners.

### **DuPont Louisville Works**

DuPont serves markets as diverse as agriculture, nutrition, electronics and communications, safety and protection, home and construction, transportation and apparel.

DuPont Louisville Works is the largest producer of Freon 22 in North America. In the process of manufacturing that product, a greenhouse gas called HFC-23 is emitted. Decision makers at the company set out to mitigate the effects by lowering HFC-23 emissions.

They did so in two ways; the primary method was to make the plant more efficient by producing less greenhouse gas per ton of product as part of the manufacturing process. The second method was to improve equipment reliability in order to ensure the capture of as much HFC-23 as possible.

Personnel at the plant took responsibility for the effort, and the product-to-pollution ratio was lowered by 43 percent. This improvement represents a reduction equal to more than 2 million metric tons of carbon dioxide. This is equivalent to:

- Taking over 400,000 passenger vehicles off the road;
- The amount of carbon dioxide sequestered annually by 1.6 million acres of average U.S. forest land; and,
- Eliminating the burning of more than 8,500 railcars of coal.

The reduction of HFC-23 emissions represents a benefit to the environment because of the compound's high global warming potential. DuPont Louisville Works considers the 43 percent reduction in carbon dioxide emissions a sustainable practice at this location. New improvement designs have begun to reduce HFC-23 emissions an additional 70 percent by the year 2015.

### **Smithfield Middlesboro**

Increasing recycling from 2 tons per month to 37 tons per month requires much effort, but that is what the packing plant in Smithfield decided to do.

The environmental management team at Smithfield Middlesboro collaborates quarterly to plan, implement, review, and sustain environmental projects. The team has four corporate objectives and two plant-wide objectives annually. One of the top objectives is reducing waste to the landfill.

Toward this end, employees recycled smoke wood chips, large sheets of plastic, brown paper towels, cardboard cores and ingredient bag paper, office paper and magazines, household batteries, electronic waste and plastic stripping.

**Kentucky State University, The Green Society, Frankfort**

The Green Society at Kentucky State University (KSU) is a student environmental club composed of science majors and focuses on ways to make KSU more sustainable. Students have worked to remove 48,000 pounds of electronic waste from campus. Other group activities include:

- A recycle-a-thon competition in which student groups submitted recyclable items to compete to win prizes;
- A fashion show featuring clothing made of recycled materials;
- A cell phone and battery recycling program;
- Campus clean-ups;
- An environmental art contest;
- Tree planting events;
- Campus recycling motto and logo contests; and
- Logo and motto contest for T-shirts and recycling bins.

**Lifetime Achievement Award: Lee Andrews, Frankfort**

Freshwater mussels and Indiana bats are beneficiaries of the work of Lee Andrews, but his out-of-the-box thinking is also credited with developing landmark agreements that have precluded the need to list four Kentucky species as endangered under the Endangered Species Act.

Andrews created two conservation funds that are credited with a number of major milestones. The first is the Kentucky Aquatic Resources Fund, which directs funding to priority aquatic needs.

The second, the Indiana Bat Conservation Fund (ICBF) is a nonprofit that focuses on concerns associated with the federally endangered Indiana bat. Since its inception in 2008, the IBCF has helped acquire nearly 7,000 acres of conservation lands in the Commonwealth, including lands now owned and managed by state land management agencies, the Clarks River National Wildlife Refuge and several conservation land trusts.

Andrews' work and commitment gives credence to his dedication to protect critical habitat and rare species, land management and conservation.

**Public Service Award: Berea Solar Farm**

The only community solar farm in the state of Kentucky is a large, single-solar electric installation on the Berea Municipal Utilities property. It is owned and managed by the utility, but individuals may lease individual photovoltaic solar panels and the power generated by their leased panels is credited back to their own individual utility bills.

When the offer was first proposed, the community responded enthusiastically, leasing all available panels within five days. This led to an additional 60 panels, which led to an expansion of 132 more. The panels are generating solar energy

as they should and credits are flowing back to lease customers and reducing their utility bills.

The project has exceeded its original goals, which were to reduce carbon emissions, boost energy flexibility in Berea, and keep money in Berea that would otherwise flow out of the city to pay for electricity bought from the wholesale supplier. The community aspect of the project enables Berea Municipal Utilities to install a solar electric facility at largely no cost by enlisting the community to participate and reap the benefits through solar leases.

While the project was never sold on the basis of reducing overall utility costs to customers, it appears that over the lease period, customers will roughly break even on their investments. This will occur due to the reductions in their bills for the duration of the lease period. It will approximately equal the cost of the 25-year lease.

Other advantages include:

- The project combines the benefits of economies of scale and professional management with the benefits of individual ownership and private earnings.
- Individuals who can't afford the expense of a single solar installation can still realize the benefits of leasing a small portion of a commercial sized system.
- Customers who lack property well suited for solar installations can still realize its benefits.
- Individuals who may not even be Berea Utilities customers but who want to support a facility which is a Berea Utilities customer can lease a panel or panels and donate the energy credits to a church, school or other organization.

For a more complete description of the work these award winners have accomplished, visit the EQC website at <http://eqc.ky.gov/Pages/EarthDay.aspx>.

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